

## FOR THE HOMEOWNER

### RAMBLER RENOVATORS ADVICE FROM EXPERTS

**R**AMBLERS ARE ABUNDANT in Bloomington. As the population and the homes age, citizens wonder how they can best renovate their living spaces.

After their participation in the City's Home Improvement Fair last February, we interviewed Plekkenpol Builders Vice President of Operations Dave Goodlund and Director of Sales Troy Sinykin for answers to some frequently asked questions on updating and remodeling ramblers. With 28 years experience, Plekkenpol Builders has remodeled countless rambler kitchens, baths, lower levels and porches.

**Q** Are ramblers generally easy to remodel?

**A** Ramblers have fewer challenges than other types of homes. They have simple rooflines, the lower and main levels stack on top of each other and the rooms are usually rectangular and easily added to or merged. Their architecture adapts to craftsman and modern styles very well.



**Q** What should the rambler homeowner update first?

Most 1950s and 1960s ramblers have had their mechanicals and appliances updated once and are probably ready to have them updated again. Kitchen and bath updates are among the most common upgrades. Adding a porch or deck is a good way to add space and value. We'd also suggest converting the breezeway to a year-round space.

**Q** Because they're one level, ramblers make excellent retirement dwellings. What more can be done to make them senior-friendly?

**A** There are many things that could be done, such as:

- Combine bedrooms to make a large master suite with an accessible bathroom.
- Widen doorways and change door knobs to levers.

- Move the laundry room to main floor.
- Raise vanity heights and install grab bars.

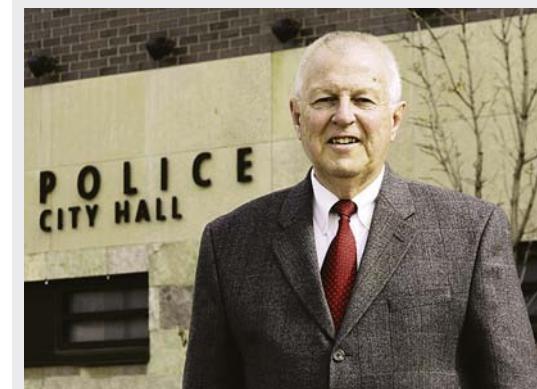
**Q** What is the most cost-effective update a homeowner can make?

**A** Increasing the home's energy efficiency by upgrading the furnace, water heater and attic insulation will make a huge impact. Then look at updating the kitchen or adding additional space.

**Q** What is the average price tag on a kitchen remodel?

**A** It varies significantly. To give a kitchen a fresh look, consider installing new lighting, flooring, countertops and hardware and adding a fresh finish to cabinets and walls. This would cost roughly \$6,000 - \$15,000.

### DEDICATED PUBLIC SERVANT SAYS GOODBYE POLICE CHIEF LAUX RETIRES



**A**FTER YEARS of dedicated service, Police Chief John Laux announced he will retire in October.

Chief Laux's law enforcement career spans nearly six decades. He began his chosen profession as a patrol officer for the Minneapolis Police Department in 1968. Laux quickly moved up the ranks, from patrol officer to investigator to sergeant before being promoted to chief in 1989.

In 1995, Laux left the Minneapolis Police Department to become executive director of the Minnesota Board of Peace Officer Standards and Training, where he spent four years.

Although Laux has always been active in the community, the opportunity to work for the Bloomington Police Department (BPD) did not present itself until 2003 when Laux served on a planning committee for Bloomington Civic Plaza.

"I have lived in Bloomington for 45 years; my kids went to school here," Laux said. "I knew I wanted to be in Bloomington."

Laux said he is proud to be part of such an outstanding department, one that boasts the highest closure rate of criminal cases in the state.

"The BPD is very accepted by residents and you don't see that in every community," Laux said. "We handle calls responsibly and with great pride."

Laux is currently board chair of the Minnesota Institute of Public Health. He is also on the board of D.A.R.E. Minnesota, CornerHouse Interagency Child Abuse and Evaluation Center, and Cornerstone, an organization dedicated to ending domestic abuse.

In addition to his community service, Laux holds many professional memberships, including: Hennepin County Chiefs of Police, Minnesota Chiefs of Police, International Association of Chiefs of Police, F.B.I. National Academy Associates and National Executive Institute.

Although he will miss leading the BPD, Laux said he is looking forward to traveling with his family and spending more time with his seven grandchildren.



### FREE HOME IMPROVEMENT SEMINARS SUSTAINABLE GARDENING AND REMODELING

**T**HE HOUSING AND REDEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (HRA) is offering two free home improvement seminars. *Sustainable Gardening: Using Native Plants and Water Management*, will be held **Thursday, August 14, at 7 p.m.** Topics for discussion include: caring for native plants, how to sustain your garden and how to grow a rain garden. *Green Materials for Remodeling* is scheduled for **Thursday, October 23, at 7 p.m.**

For more information, contact Tom Holman at 952-563-8941 or visit the City's Web site at [www.ci.bloomington.mn.us](http://www.ci.bloomington.mn.us), keyword: HRA.

## A ROUND OF APPLAUSE

### CITY DEVELOPMENTS RECOGNIZED 2007 BEST IN REAL ESTATE AWARDS

**T**HE MINNEAPOLIS/St. PAUL BUSINESS JOURNAL recognized three Bloomington developments in its annual Best in Real Estate supplement last spring.



**Best Industrial Project – Progressive Rail**, 94th Street and James Avenue, for renovating a vacant 385,000 square-foot building and turning it into a multitenant, state-of-the-art facility.

**Best Green Project – Two MarketPointe**, 4400 W. 78th St., for unique sustainability features that combine floor-to-ceiling windows, an under-floor air distribution system and high-performance lighting with recycled and sustainable building materials to make an environmentally and employee-friendly space.



**Finalist, Multitenant Office Development – 8200 Tower**, 5600 W. 83rd St., for its pre-certified Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold project, which will include 275,000 rentable square feet of office space with an on-site daycare, fitness center, concierge service and more.

### EXCELLENCE IN COMMUNICATIONS CITY TAKES HOME AWARDS

**T**HE CITY OF BLOOMINGTON recently captured five awards for communications and finance reporting.

The Government Finance Officers Association presented the City with the Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for the 2008 Budget Presentation.

At the Minnesota Association of Government Communicator's Northern Lights Awards event, Awards of Excellence went to the *Briefing, 2007 Corporate Report to the Community* and the *Insider*, the City's employee newsletter. The City's Web site, *CityWEB*, received an Award of Merit. Judges commented that the *Briefing* is "an excellent publication" that is "easy to read and well-organized."

For more information, contact Communications Administrator Janine Hill at 952-563-8819 or e-mail [jhill@ci.bloomington.mn.us](mailto:jhill@ci.bloomington.mn.us).